752 in two rows, leaving a passage between them. They thus run the
881 gauntlet and receive a good whipping ; (the flagellation is often also a separation rite) ; having gone through this unexpected experience they are caught at the other end by four men and deprived of all their clothing. Their hair is also cut, (they must evidently sever themselves from all their past), and they are brought to eight stones and seated on them. These eight stones are not far from the entrance of the yard, in a spot called " the place of the crocodile ". Opposite them are eight other stones on which eight men are sitting. These men are called *Nyahambe*, the Lion-men. They have a fearful appearance, their heads being covered with lions' manes. As soon as the boy is seated on the stone facing the Lion-man, he receives a severe blow from behind ; he turns his head to see who struck him, and sees one of the shepherds laughing at him. The operator snatches his opportunity ; while the attention of the boy is diverted, he seizes the foreskin and cuts it in two movements, first the upper part (this is quickly done and does not cause very much pain), secondly the lower part and the string, a longer and much more painful operation. The surgeons now use an ordinary European knife ; formerly they had only native-made knives. Often the boy falls down unconscious ; they then throw a jar of cold water over him. All the circumcised receive rings of woven, very soft grass which they put on their wounds, tying them round the loins with a string (shondlo). Formerly they did not anoint the sore with medicaments : the boys used only to drink a decoction which is said to stop hemorrhage ; now they use paraffin externally.

881 The boy has now *crossed* (*wela*, like a boat across a river), a technical expression which shows clearly the character of this rite of passage. He is introduced into the lodge.

The removal of the foreskin, though it cannot have the high spiritual meaning of the Jewish circumcision, seems to me also distinctly a separation rite, this part of the body representing the ancient contemptible childish life from which the initiated emerges to-day.

marginal period during which the maphisa must use protective medicines against the dangers of the bush, and keep certain rules. 224 784

As a protection they carry their charms, especially the *ndjao*, the root of a certain juncus which is used on many other occasions. As regards the taboos which they must observe, I will first mention those applying to travellers in general, especially the *salt taboo* (I. p. 339). Should they take salt with them, this would "precede them" (rangela), and they would kill no game. It will be soon enough to look for salt when they have killed. But the great taboo of these hunting trips is the *sexual taboo*. This was already imposed before starting and it must be observed Phroughout the expedition. The necessity of avoiding anything connected with sexual relations is so great that maphisa will take with them to cook their food little boys under marriageable age. What is the reason of this prohibition? I have explained it in dealing with the Thonga idea of sexual relations (I. p. 189). If the hunters transgress the law, the big animals will be so wild that it will be impossible to approach them ; they will furiously attack the men who have sinned, because they know them, and woe upon them! So much so that if the hunters see an elephant or a hippopotamus in obstinate pursuit of one of their number, they will begin to insult him for having spoilt the whole trip by his misbehaviour, and send him home. 224 784 834 825

The law of continence is also binding on *the hunters' wives* at home. It is true that when the absence of their husbands is prolonged for a very long time they may become unfaithful to them and the men, on their return, will find babies waiting for them which are not their true children. This will cause them no unhappiness, as these babies none the less belong to them, their wives having been duly bought, and the time for fear is now passed, as they have returned home safely. The fact that these men welcome the children born during their absence caused me to think that hunters' wives were not subject to the sexual taboo as their husbands are. But further inquiry has shown that this is not true. Old Makhani assured me that incontinence on the part of the wife at home would have as a consequence that the husband would be attacked and killed by wild beasts far away in the desert. 224 784 837 851 752

825 *Shipyahla* (Ro.), *Mhiri* (yin-tin, Dj.) is the big, lazy, grey puff adder,
136 which creeps along the ground, and is one of the most venomous kinds, together with the *Mhamba* (yin-tin), a slender species, very swift and often found on trees. "When you meet a mhiri," say the Nkunas, "throw a little earth on it and you will soon see
[752] its brother!" Of course magicians have plenty of drugs to cure snake bites. For this purpose they use the head of the adder roasted and pulverised. *Shibatlankombe*, (Naja nigricollis), "the one which carves a spoon" is the name of a species which
[762] curves its neck till it looks like a spoon. The *Hhlaru* (yin-tin) is the boa. It is eaten. Another member of the Clapidae family is the *Likure*, a pretty greyish violet species (Causus Lichtensteinii).
[769] Amongst the harmless snakes are those little blue ones, *Shihundje* (Dendrophis subcarinatus), which are considered as emissaries of the ancestor spirits. I shall mention them again later on. The *Nsoma* (yin-tin), very common and harmless, is probably Dispholidus typus. Some small ones, not larger than worms, but hard and shining like metal, are called *Tumbi-tumbi*, because they hide (tumba) in the sand. One of them seems to be Xenocalamus bicolor.

825 There are also the legendary snakes of the Thongas. On the
777 Coast they speak of the *Buwumati*, which dwells in the lakes and is invisible. It is only heard crying "bu-wu-bu-wu" when rain is falling, and its voice is as loud as that of an antelope. If it shows itself to a traveller, it is a very bad sign. The story is told of a man who came back from consulting a bone-thrower. He saw the buwumati lying on the ground, its coils extending to a great distance, closing all the passages. He retraced his steps, but after three days he died. In the Transvaal, this dreadful snake is called *Shimhemhemhe*, the name being an imitation of its cry.
825 This superstition is perhaps of Pedi origin, but it has been accepted by the Nkunas. The shimhemhemhe dwells in certain dark woody ravines on the slopes of the Drakensberg mountains. If anyone imprudently penetrates there, the snake pursues him, creeping along the branches above, and bites him on the top of the head. A man met with it once on the way to Thabina; he saw it on the road, its head raised, a shining head of two colours. There

755 seen another instance of this (p. 188). It is in keeping with two ideas
756 which are very familiar to Natives and which we shall meet with again later, viz. that disease is a material thing and that it is generally caused by this thing being introduced into the body by wizards.

The mixed character of the medical art of the primitives, which is so evident in their medicine-men, will appear clearly as we continue our study.

II. *Medical Practices.*

752 *Surgical cases* are treated in the worst possible way, any intervention with a knife being looked on as absurd, if not culpable (1). When dealing with *sores*, the aim of the ñanga seems to be to conceal them under a black powder, so as to give the patient a false impression; he thinks himself healed, as he can no longer see his sore. Mankhelu used to grind the bark of the *Ndjupfura* tree (a tree with a white sap), and put the powder on the sore to make it dry up, renewing the application on the fourth day, then five days later, then six days later. — For *wounds* Kokolo used the sap of the *Shilangamahlo*, letting it fall in drops on the bleeding wound. The *Nkahlu* (p. 329), with its milky sap, is commonly used for this purpose. — "But," says Kokolo, "the chief is *Shilangamahlo*." *Bruises* are treated by the *rimba* method. When a person has fallen and some complication is feared, a fire is made; when there are enough glowing embers, and the soil is very hot, the ashes are pushed aside and a little sand taken from the river is poured on the spot, and some nkuhlu leaves on top of it. The patient leans over the place "which has been so treated;" this is an unexpected application of the principle "similia similibus curantur;" — as the soil has been burnt, but afterwards "quenched" (timula) by the cool sand, so the bruise will be prevented from burning him dangerously! — *Decayed teeth* are not extracted, properly speaking; they are broken down with a piece of iron, on which the Native dentist beats with a hammer

(1) Gungunyana, who killed thousands of poor Ba-Chopi without the slightest remorse, could not conceal his horror of Dr. Liengme, who dared to amputate limbs, or to cut open the body in order to cure patients!

752 until he has removed as much as he can of the tooth! Sometimes he breaks the jaw also ; the jaw may even pass through the cheek, causing a frightful wound! Once one of my colleagues had to perform the operation of the removal of the inferior maxillary bone, which was protruding as the result of the so-called extraction of a tooth by a ñanga! — *Snake bites* are treated with a powder made of a snake burnt to ashes, and some ingredients mixed with it, the whole being *salted* with common salt. Incisions are made in all the joints, wrist, ankle, elbow, and also in front of the neck, and the powder introduced into them. Children are inoculated as a means of prevention, so that, when bitten, the venom will not affect them ; the doctor has "preceded the snake" (yi yi rangerile).

757 278 *Medical cases* are generally treated more rationally than surgical cases. Here are some of Kokolo's and Spoon's prescriptions.

To begin with the drug used when one "feels his head," in other words has a *headache*; this is the root of a shrub called *Nhlangula*, which seems to be a regular anaesthetic, and is used as follows. The fresh bark is scraped with a knife, and a certain quantity is folded up in a cloth and applied to the forehead for half a day. In case of *toothache* the same drug is used together with another called *Ndjenga* : they are boiled ; a little of the decoction thus obtained is held in the mouth, and the pain should disappear.

When it "bites inside," that is to say when one suffers from *colic* or looseness of the bowels, the remedy is *Munwangati*, *Shimbyati* and *Shidlanyoka* made up into a bunch. The doctor prepares this medicine with great care, cutting the roots into equal lengths and tying them together with a band of palm leaf. (See illustration, No. 2.) ½ He concocts his remedy with a larger quantity of the roots of the milder type, and only a few pieces of those which act more violently. The bunch called *shitsimbo* is then boiled to bring out the active principles of the drugs, and the decoction is taken by the patient, just as it is. Sometimes it is mixed with maize, when preparing the meal, and taken in that way. As the bunch, or packet, of these roots retains its medicinal properties for a long time, a single packet may be used over and over again during a whole week.

The prescription for *dysentery* is as follows : *Shimbyati*, *Shi-*

½ [p. 460 -- analyst]